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The Master and Margarita: A Fantasy of Redemption[1]

Jonathan Ludwig

NEARLY SIXTY years have passed since Bulgakov completed *The Master and Margarita*, and nearly thirty-five since its first translation into English. Despite the large number of articles and monographs written in this time, arguments continue over the definition of its genre. Barratt asks "precisely what sort of novel is *The Master and Margarita*? Is it to be read primarily for its socio-political significance, or does its real meaning reside elsewhere?" (32). What canon is it part of? Is it an allegory, an esoteric, symbolic text, or a fantasy? In this article I shall demonstrate that it follows in the tradition of Anglo-Irish fairy tale and fantasy writing extending from Shakespeare's fairy plays, stretching to George MacDonald's *Lilith* (1895), and continuing with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1936–49). Within the parameters of this discussion, I also reexamine Woland's role within the text of the novel, as well as his literary predecessors.

While Bulgakov did write traditional "Russian" works, such as his nineteenth century realist novel *Notes of a Country Doctor*, he was a writer who was not only aware of new literary traditions and forms from outside of Russia but who also experimented with and used them extensively in his own writings. This is most clear when we consider the extensive scholarship discussing the influence of Goethe's *Faust* on *The Master and Margarita*. Curtis notes that, in addition to Goethe, other great Western European authors, such as Molière, Cervantes, and Shakespeare "formed part of his cultural world" (24). H. G. Wells also arguably belongs to this list; Rydel indicates that *The Island of Dr. Moreau* considers the same themes as Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog*. *The Heart of a Dog*, along with *The Fatal Eggs*, are works that comfortably fit in the science fiction/fantasy tradition, which extends from an English literary tradition that Russia, with the noted exception of Zamyatin who also borrowed extensively from Wells, did not have at that time, and arguably still does not. *The Master and Margarita* descends from this decidedly Anglo-Irish literary tradition.

If we listen to Begemot, we might have to toss aside any notion that *The Master and Margarita* belongs to this fairy tradition.[2] The only direct mention of a "fairy tale" is when he vehemently denies being part of any fairy tale at all: "'Cats aren't supposed to wear trousers, Messire,' replied the cat with great dignity. 'Will you tell me next time that I have to wear boots? It's only in

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fairy tales that you see a cat in boots, messire'" (218). Begemot, however, is an inveterate liar, who, among other things, cheats at chess, so his denial that he is in a fairy tale simply because he is not wearing boots is not unimpeachable evidence. Indeed, because Begemot, a cat, and the other members of Woland's entourage, themselves also unusual personages, consistently demonstrate "Truth" by uncovering the deceit, treachery, and lies of the Moscow populace through magical muckraking and other mystical means, these actions strongly hint that he is indeed a character in a fairy tale.

The type of fairy tale that Begemot acts within is a different type than that discussed by Bruno Bettelheim and Max Lüthi; for them a fairy tale is a fiction with a happy resolution that helps educate a child to overcome psychological traumas such as growing up, leaving home, or getting married. Bulgakov certainly did not write *The Master and Margarita* with an audience of children in mind! Rather, the novel is a fairy tale for adults. C. N. Manlove defines the adult fairy tale, more commonly termed fantasy, as "a fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (1). As such, the fiction presupposes a certain narratee; it is written for those living in a particular time and place and with a specific literary and cultural legacy. The message of the novel, however, continues to be universal, with the literary elements and plot devices selected from a long and rich tradition.

The novel takes place in the Moscow of the 1930s and is full of everyday people and events rooted in the society and mores of the period. Nevertheless, the wondrous elements Manlove discusses are also present. Woland and his minions are supernatural beings with whom Margarita becomes intimately familiar.[3] We also encounter the wonder and spectacle seen in Woland's show at the Variety Theater and at his ball, in his entourage's antics throughout Moscow, an entourage that includes a gun-toting cat, and in their abilities to transmogrify and travel through time and space at will.

In this type of fairy tale, failure is just as likely as success, and death is just as likely an outcome as living happily-ever-after. We see this in works such as the aforementioned *Lilith* and *Dracula* as well as in Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*, works that have unhappy resolutions and whose narratives are death oriented. It is into this world that Margarita enters and in which she is quickly surrounded by what Tolkien terms "arresting strangeness": bizarre and unusual lands, people, and events ("Fantasy" 79).

The essential story line of *The Master and Margarita* is a traditional quest, with the expected Campbellian structure: a call to adventure, a separation, an initiation, an epiphany, and a return.

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and

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> a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (30)

In brief, Margarita is summoned to her adventure by Korovyov not once, as is traditional, but twice, to emphasize that she is undertaking this quest *of her own free will*. Once she has accepted this call, Azazello gives her a sacred gift, the magical cream, which allows her to reach Woland safely in the mysterious secondary "other world," a world in which the rules of the primary world do not apply. Here she is tested, is successful, and is returned to the world.

Under this analysis, why Bulgakov divides the novel narrationally into two parts (*chasti*) is clear. The first part functions as do Tolkien's *Silmarillion* and *The Hobbit*: it introduces several of the major characters and sets the atmosphere for the upcoming adventure. The hero does not yet appear, nor is the reason for the quest that is to commence revealed. Woland and his entourage are introduced, and their powers are demonstrated, but why they are in Moscow is, as yet, unclear. The Master appears in only one scene, where he reveals the reason for his imprisonment; he only casually mentions Margarita's existence. The second part, in which the hero is introduced and is admitted into the realm of the fantastic, is the journey quest, where the call to adventure, the series of trials, the return, and the reward all occur.[4]

Margarita stands out from the traditional fantasy hero. First, she is a woman, whereas it is a near universal rule that the hero in fairy tales, fantasy, and mythology is a man. Furthermore, she does not stumble accidentally into her role, nor is she forced into it. Rather, she is presented from the outset as the chosen one, for she bears the correct name. Korovyov notes, in his role as herald to the adventure:

> Messire is a bachelor.... But he needs a hostess.... According to tradition ...the hostess of the ball has, first of all, to be named Margarita, and second, she has to be a native of the place where the ball is held. And we, as you can see, are traveling and find ourselves at the present time in Moscow. We found one hundred and twenty-one Margaritas in Moscow, and, would you believe it...not one of them was suitable! And then, at long last, a stroke of luck... you won't refuse to assume this obligation, will you? (215)

Le Guin notes that naming is everything in fantasy. To know the true name of a person or a thing is to understand its soul; to possess the chosen name is to ensure success in the journey ahead: "to know the name of an island or a character is to know the island or the person" ("Dreams" 189); all magic consists in "the true naming of a thing" (*Wizard* 46). Names in this novel, as elsewhere in fantasy, have a magical power and significance: Margarita is the chosen one; Frieda must be set "free"; and Woland (an aptronym from the Russian *volja*) represents "free will."[5]

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Bearing the correct name, Margarita must succeed in her adventure. Campbell notes that "the elect encounters no delaying obstacles and makes no mistakes" (173). Having been all but told by Korovyov that she is the chosen one, and recalling his hints at their first meeting that she would learn the fate of her beloved Master, Margarita reaffirms her acceptance of his call to adventure without further quandary, stating "No, I won't [decline this obligation]" (215).

Having accepted her destiny, Margarita next meets Woland, who acts as her tempter, as her educator, and as her protector—a dark guardian angel—in this adventure. In this way, Woland too is an unusual character in a traditional quest. Although he admits to being the devil, he is not a representative of pure evil whom the hero must defeat in a battle of wits, as Bilbo does Gollum in the riddle game. This role is reserved for the State and its representatives: the Sanhedrin, the secret police, and the state-supported literary establishment. Woland is a typical literary devil very much reminiscent of Dostoevsky's devil in *The Brothers Karamazov*: he is well-dressed, well-spoken, cosmopolitan, and suave, with an ironic sense of humor. Woland gives people exactly what they want and believe in.

Woland's enigmatic identity is stated in the epigraph to the novel, which consists of lines taken from *Faust*: he is a character who wishes to do evil, but only good results from his actions. In this way too Woland is a typical literary devil. As such, he is an instrument of a higher good. How is this possible? Recall Woland's words to Matthew the Levite, which unite St. Augustine's theodicy and Taoist duality:[6]

> You pronounced your words as if you refuse to acknowledge the existence of either shadows or evil. But would you kindly ponder this question: What would your good do if evil didn't exist, and what would the earth look like if all the shadows disappeared? After all, shadows are cast by living things and people. Here is the shadow of my sword. But shadows also come from trees and from living beings. Do you want to strip the earth of all trees and living things just because of your fantasy of enjoying naked light? You're stupid. (305)

Echoing his philosophical referents, Woland asserts that if good exists, evil must also exist, as a mirror-reflection or as a shadow thereof. Such a notion is quite indicative of fantasy. Consider the words of the wizard-teacher Ogion to Ged in Le Guin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*:

> But you must not change one thing, one pebble, one grain of sand, until you know what good and evil will follow in that act. The world is in balance, in Equilibrium. A wizard's power of Changing and of Summoning can shake the balance of the world. It is danger-

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> ous, that power. It is most perilous. It must follow knowledge and serve need. To light a candle is to cast a shadow (57).

This explains Woland: rather than being an incarnation of evil or even an instrument of evil, Woland is a tool of good, serving not as the shadow cast by the light, but as the candle, which the light uses to expose the shadow. Woland fulfills this role most clearly in Moscow, where in using his powers, he exposes the evil of the people living there—their treachery, their selfishness, and their greed—as a byproduct of his antics.

There is a light-dark duality in Woland. Because he is not merely evil, his powers are not fleeting, nor are they limited in scope; his powers extend throughout all space and time. For Woland it is just as easy to move from three-dimensional space into the fifth-dimension as it is for him to move from twentieth-century Moscow to the crucifixion of Yeshua to a breakfast with Kant.[7] This is because Woland perceives time, not as a unidirectional, linear variable, what Le Guin terms *chronos* (Margarita's time), but as a multi-directional, eternal constant, *kairos* (Yeshua's, the Master's, and, of course, his own time). *Chronos* is the alarm-clock time of every-day living: getting up, going to work, eating, and sleeping; *kairos* is God's time, real time, the time of creation, the time of the artist. Woland, a master and artistic creator in his own right, who understands *kairos* fully, is able to bend and shape both space and time according to his will and moves freely throughout both.[8]

Although Margarita is foreign to this concept of space-time, having now entered completely into what Tolkien terms the "secondary world" (80), she must quickly learn to function here and perform the task set out for her. As Korovyov explained earlier, her task is very simple: she must serve as hostess of the ball over which Woland presides as King. She serves as his Queen, symbolically entering into a "mystical marriage," what Campbell terms *gamos* (109), with Woland. Thus Margarita achieves symbolic apotheosis, becoming for the evening as mystical a being as Woland. She, however, is sacred, whereas Woland is not, for she is the chosen one, and he is the devil.

As expected of a chosen one, Margarita is indeed successful in her task; as the hero, she performs this task even better than expected, and she realizes the power of her own inner strength for the first time. A long procession of choice criminals and sinners kiss her knee and eventually this ritual becomes very painful for her. Despite the pain she feels at the ball, where Bulgakov describes her buckling legs, the pain coming from her right knee, her general weariness, and how she half-fainted and collapsed to the floor, she continues to persevere and play hostess. Segal notes that it is in this instant of greatest suffering, when facing the most intense physical or emotional challenges, the hero

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> does what no one else will or can do ... Literally, the hero discovers that there is more to the world than the physical world. Symbolically, he discovers that there is more to him than his consciousness. Literally, the hero discovers the ultimate nature of the world. Symbolically, he discovers his own ultimate nature. He discovers his true identity. He discovers who he really is. (4–5)

It is at this very moment that Margarita achieves her epiphany, realizing her own power and strength; tormented, she ignores her own physical pain, continues to play her role, and completes her task.

As with other instances of magic and the supernatural in *The Master and Margarita*, this epiphany occurs in a unique place. In discussing where her trials and temptations occur, Orual in C. S. Lewis' *Till We Have Faces* indicates where the traditional hero faces adversity and achieves victory:

> I say the gods deal very unrightly with us. For they will neither (which would be best of all) go away and leave us to live our own short days to ourselves, nor will they show themselves openly and tell us what they would have us do. For that too would be endurable. But to hint and hover, to draw near us in dreams and oracles, or in a waking vision that vanishes as soon as seen, to be dead silent when we question them and then glide back and whisper (words we cannot understand) in our ears when we most wish to be free of them, and to show to one what they hide from another; what is all this but cat-and-mouse play, blindman's buff, and mere jugglery? Why must holy places be dark places? (249)

Mara E. Donaldson notes that the message of Orual's plea is that "the god comes to [test] her nightly in holy darkness" (168); in fantasy, a hero faces the most challenging tests, achieves an epiphany, and is victorious in holy darkness. Consider Bilbo in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. He faces five trials: the troll's camp, where, at night, he is sent to steal food; the riddle game with Gollum in his dark cave; the fight with the spiders in darkest Mirkwood; the escape from the underground prison of the Wood Elves' palace; and the confrontation in Smaug's lair. Each of these places is physically dark, yet this darkness is holy, precisely because the hero is successful there.[9]

Margarita does not face her greatest test in physical darkness, for the ballroom is lit up with thousands of candles. Thus lighted, however, it is not a spiritually holy place, as is expected by such imagery, for all the great murderers and thieves of history, those who are evil, attend this ball. Therefore, this ball is not "holy darkness," but unholy light. The same unusual dualism that exists through Woland again appears here at his ball, in this key moment of the adventure.

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Having completed her task, she and Woland return from the fifth dimension to the aptly named Apartment #50, the gateway back to the primary world, where she is tested one final time.

> "Perhaps you wish to say something before you go?"
> "No, nothing, Messire," replied Margarita proudly, "Except, of course, that if you still need me, I'm happy to be of service. I'm not in the least bit tired and I thoroughly enjoyed myself at the ball. So much so that if it had lasted longer, I would have been glad to let thousands more murderers and gallows birds kiss my knee."
> "Bravo! You're absolutely right!" said Woland in a fearsome, booming voice. "That's the way!...We've been testing you ... Never ask for anything! Not ever, not for anything, especially from someone who's more powerful than you are. They will offer and grant everything themselves. Sit down, proud woman.... And so, Margot,...what would you like in return for having served as my hostess today? What do you wish for having gone naked at the ball? What value do you put on your knee? What damages did you incur from my guests, whom you just referred to as gallows birds? Speak! And do so without constraint since it is I who have made the offer." (240–41)

Having passed this final test, which does take place in the physical darkness of Woland's apartment, Margarita is given the power of asking for anything she wishes. Woland facilitates free will by allowing her to choose anything for herself that she desires. She again demonstrates heroism by not asking for anything for herself; instead, she keeps a promise, asking that Frieda be set free, which she is then told to do herself. Woland cannot forgive, for just as he is not pure evil, neither is he the embodiment of good; Margarita, who is good, and who like Woland has mystical powers through their symbolic marriage, may grant forgiveness. As this was not a request that Woland could fulfill, Margarita is given another opportunity to ask for something, and Woland returns the Master to her. Together with her Master, Margarita completes the return from the secondary "other" world to the primary world of Moscow.

At this point, the quest would seem to be over, but Bulgakov again experiments with the genre by giving the novel a false ending. The hero has returned home with the ostensible object of the quest, her Master. But one element of a fantastic hero journey has not been fulfilled: a true quest must have a societal reason for existing, not a personal reason, and if evil is not defeated during the quest, then the hero traditionally returns with a sacred boon to defeat the evil. The purpose of a quest is not to rescue a loved one, and its result is not to live happily-ever-after; it is to restore societal order and defeat some evil. True evil in *The Master and Margarita* has not yet been defeated; therefore, the quest cannot be over and must continue.

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Margarita and her Master remain at his apartment until Woland arrives. Here the quest recommences, but it is now the Master, the failed hero of a former quest, who emerges as hero. The Master is a failed hero, for although he started to write his book, he was not able to finish it, having been captured by the State and imprisoned. He failed in his quest to complete his art. Now freed by Margarita's successful quest, he is finally able to use his art, the book which Woland returned to him with the now famous words "Manuscripts don't burn" (245), as an instrument of good.

At the request of Matthew the Levite, speaking on behalf of a higher power, Margarita and her Master are to be rewarded with rest, not light.

> "He has read the Master's work," began Levi Matvei, "and asks that you take the Master with you and grant him peace. Is that so difficult for you to do, Spirit of Evil?
>
> "Nothing is difficult for me to do," replied Woland, "as you well know." He was silent for a moment and then added, "But why aren't you taking him with you to the light?"
>
> "He has not earned light, he has earned peace," said Levi in a sad voice.
>
> "Tell him it shall be done," replied Woland,..."and leave me this instant." (305)

On their final journey toward rest, Margarita and her Master make one important stop. After traveling for some time, the riders approach a man, staring at the moon with unseeing eyes. This is Pilate, who for twenty-four thousand full moons has been punished for his single act of moral cowardice at one full moon. Standing before Pilate, Woland turns to the Master, telling him "Well, then, now you can finish your novel with a single sentence" (324). The Master cries out "Free! Free! He is waiting for you!" (324). With this, Pilate is taken into the light to join Yeshua, and Margarita and her Master are able to complete their journey. At this point all three strands of the novel, in reference to both space and time, have come together: Woland, as the catalyst for free will; the Master, a failed artist; and Pilate, a man guilty of the sin of omission. Thus, the quest is finally finished.

The command of Woland, the response of the Master, and the freeing of Pilate, all of which unite and then complete the novel, finally reveal the true nature of the quest: to liberate the artistic creator so that the creator's art may be free to challenge evil. As Curtis notes, this work "confirms the value of the artist" (133). The artist, like Woland, understands time as *kairos*; thus, Margarita's Master is able to cross temporal lines figuratively, as we have seen Woland do literally, and write the "Truth" about what happened so many years ago. With this, we now realize that the message of *The Master and Margarita* is, as in all of fantasy, a universal and an eternal message.

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Yevtushenko, in his poem "Nefertiti," written some twenty-five years after *The Master and Margarita*, demonstrates the eternal power of art over evil, by reaching back through time to cite the tenth-century Arab philosopher Avicenna.

> He kept strengthening his foundations,
> but, as Avicenna once remarked,
> when, in nature, authority come face to face
> with beauty, its value depreciates. (126)

"Art," as Barratt writes, "retains the power to disturb, and to amaze, to entertain and to puzzle, provoking us to think again about what it means to be human"(327). In *The Master and Margarita*, the State tried to silence the artist by imprisoning him; he was rescued by a more powerful hero in a journey quest, with aid from a supernatural force, who restored his artistic powers to him. With this, the true object of the quest now in his hands, he uses it to free another by completing the story, and is himself rewarded with a restful eternity. Thus Bulgakov concludes his work with what Curtis terms "an optimistic insistence on the power of the spiritual in human life and in the individuality of man" (273).

Approaching the novel in this way, and allowing us to see it as a work of fantasy, presents the reader with a number of clear advantages. C. S. Lewis notes in his essay "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said" that an author will often turn away from conventional genres and turn instead to fantasy, believing it to be the best vehicle for conveying the desired message. He notes this when discussing "The Chronicles of Narnia."

> Some people seem to think that I began by asking myself how I could say something about Christianity to children; then fixed on the fairy tale as an instrument; then collected information about child-psychology and decided what age group I'd write for; then drew up a list of basic Christian truths and hammered out "allegories" to embody them. [...] I couldn't write in that way at all. Everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't even anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord. It was part of the bubbling. (116)

It is not only the author who goes through the process of "bubbling," Lewis continues; the reader also goes through this process in understanding the "meaning" of the work. To his own question: "You write as if a fairy tale were a thing of importance: must it have a meaning?" MacDonald answers that "It cannot help having some meaning; if it have proportion and harmony it has vitality, and vitality is truth. [...] Everyone, however, who feels the story, will

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read its meaning after his own nature and development; one man will read one meaning in it, another will read another" (16–17). If we choose to read the novel as fantasy along the lines George MacDonald suggests, it becomes clear why so many different interpretations of the novel exist with equal plausibility.

Reading the novel as fantasy also allows us to consider another set of referents for it: Shakespeare's fairy plays *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. That Bulgakov was intimately familiar with Shakespeare is not in doubt. V. I. Losev indicates that in 1936 Bulgakov was commissioned to pen a dramatization for the Moscow Art Theater based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, with additional scenes from *Henry IV* (411);[10] and, as I noted in the introduction, Shakespeare was one of the Western European authors with whom Bulgakov was very familiar. If Bulgakov knew *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, clearly one of Shakespeare's lesser plays, he was surely well acquainted with the more famous *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*.

Traditionally *The Master and Margarita* has been traced back to Goethe's poem *Faust*: why then should we look to Shakespeare as a model for Bulgakov's last novel? Goethe's *Faust* is in part itself a work based on an earlier play of Shakespeare's era: Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, who took his idea from older German oral tradition. Furthermore, the novel itself follows the format of Shakespeare's plays more closely than it does *Faust*. Both are examples of Menander's New Comedy, which has a by now familiar structure: it starts in a structured imperial setting where things go wrong and where there is a conflict based on some irrational law; confusion and complications take place to make the situation worse, requiring a trip to a dark place (here: the wood or Prospero's island), where the rules of society do not apply, and where the characters are able to sort out events. In these plays this sorting out is accomplished through the trickery and deceit of an impish character (Puck or Prospero respectively) who wishes to cause mischief and punish evil doers. Invariably this character does exactly this, yet in so doing effects a good outcome, however unwittingly. During this trickery, which seems like a dream to the characters, if not the audience as well, the female character around whom the original complication revolves is revealed to be a chosen one of high birth and hence worthy of the position chosen for her. Both plays conclude with a return to the real world, via an awakening, a marriage, and the possibility of living happily ever after. "The course of true love never did run smooth," (*MSD*, I, i, 134) Lysander notes, but it does turn out successfully in both Shakespeare and Bulgakov.

Although *The Master and Margarita* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* share plot structure and literary devices, it is more fitting to proceed directly to *The Tempest* and to the artist magician Prospero as literary precursors for the novel and for Woland respectively. Both *The Tempest* and *The Master and*

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Margarita were written at the end of their author's literary careers; both can be read as a kind of farewell by the authors to their art. Both are separation comedies, whose plot centers on a figure possessing magical powers who can control space and time, if not life and death. And, perhaps most importantly, both works involve the burning of a single book.

In this last regard we see Prospero as a direct literary predecessor to the Master, more so even than Faust. Prospero himself, whose name is the Italian translation of Faustus, "the chosen one," is, according to Bloom, an anti-Faustian hero (663); and *The Tempest* was Shakespeare's parody of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, one of the earliest written works on this topic. In the most compelling scene of *Faust*, we see the protagonist burning his books, not books that he has written, but his library collection, the literary art of others. Prospero however burns only one book:

> But this rough magic
> I here adjure; and when I have required
> Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
> To work mine end upon their senses that
> This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown *my book.* (*The Tempest*, V, i, 50–57, emphasis mine)

Prospero's book is the book of his life, his artistic creation, and the narrative of his own intellectual quest, just as the Master's book is the story of his life, the creation of his art, and the story of his own intellectual quest. This makes the Master an anti-Faustian hero, a true artist in his own right, as was Prospero before him.

Although Prospero, in this one important sense, is a literary precursor to the Master, he is equally a referent for Woland. Both Prospero and Woland exist in *kairos*, the time of the artist, which they control and within which they cause others to operate. Both have the elements at their command, as well as the ability to destroy life and restore it: Woland brings back Berlioz for an instant, and Prospero refers to all of these powers in his most famous soliloquy.

> I have bedimmed
> The noontime sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
> Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
> Have I made shake and by the spurs plucked up
> The pine and cedar; graves at my command

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> Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
> By my so potent art. (*The Tempest*, V, i, 41–50)

Both have under their protection a virtuous woman: Margarita at the gallows ball and a young Miranda in love for the very first time. Both use clothing to trip up members of and to expose the fraud inherent in the society of the time. Most important, however, both set out to punish—Woland the inhabitants of Moscow by tempting them to exercise their own free will; Prospero those who usurped and banished him to the island through direct punitive action. In so doing, both inadvertently restore societal structure and redeem those who deserve redemption.

Bloom notes that Shakespeare invented the human, by giving his characters true human value and form. He belongs to a literary tradition in which the reader or spectator is supposed to care about the characters themselves, rather than the lesson they represented. But the conclusions to Shakespeare's comedies are not unequivocally happy; to be sure his comedies end with marriages, but they are seldom happy or potentially long-lasting, as they were forced, coerced, or mystically initiated.[11]

Bulgakov, however, shows us a different marriage at the end of his fantasy: there is no doubt that this marriage is one of true love, one entered into willingly by both parties, and one that will last through eternity. We see two different resolutions in Shakespeare and Bulgakov. Shakespeare operates on the narrative/structural plane—he brings the plot to a traditional comedic conclusion. Bulgakov's resolution operates on the plane of the higher truth. In Bulgakov's fictive universe the world is set right thanks to Woland's occult intervention into the lives of the characters: Margarita frees Frieda, Pilate, and her beloved Master, the failed author, whom she marries. The difference in these victorious comedies, to paraphrase Milne's terminology, is between Shakespearean resolution and Bulgakovian redemption.

Notes

[1] An earlier version of the first half of this paper was presented at the 1995 AATSEEL meeting in Chicago; an earlier version of the entire paper was presented at the 1999 Canadian Association of Slavists conference in Sherbrooke, Quebec. The final research and writing of this article was supported by a Short-term Grant for research from the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

[2] Hoisington uses Propp's analysis of the fairy tale to discuss the structure and narrative elements in *The Master and Margarita*. By using Joseph Campbell's monomyth, I am able to relate the novel not only to fairy tales but to all of fantasy.

[3] Although Margarita becomes intimately familiar with Woland and his entourage, she is not a familiar of Woland as his minions are. As familiars, they are required

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to serve his every need and follow his every command. As Margarita is not one of Woland's familiars, she does not have to follow his commands. As I show, she is both allowed and able to exercise her own free will and thus make her own decisions throughout their relationship.

[4] Although Bulgakov has made a bipartite division in the novel, the narrative is multidimensional both in terms of space and in terms of time. Woland and his minions have the power of interdimensional space/time travel. We also see a shift in temporal dimensions through the anachrony of analepsis/prolepsis which occurs throughout the novel: we travel back in time with Woland to the time of Yeshua's execution, some of which has already occurred in the Master's novel (another space/time dimension—this time a narratological one), and other of which occurs as we observe it; and we look ahead to the future with Woland when he correctly predicts Berlioz's death.

[5] The names Margarita and Woland appear in Goethe's *Faust*, which Stenbock-Fermor and others have argued is the literary precursor to and strongest influence on *The Master and Margarita*. Hence they would assert that the names have no meaning other than being derived from this novel. Barratt persuasively argues against a strong Faustian influence on *The Master and Margarita* when he notes that "it emerges that the allusions to Goethe are a diversionary tactic as skillfully prepared as any false trail in a good detective story" (138). He continues by asking, "how far Woland resembles Mephistopheles, the Master Faust, and Margarita Gretchen" (170), and concludes that there is little resemblance to be found. "The Master makes no wager with any devil; Margarita is neither seduced nor betrayed in the manner of Gretchen. And in his subsequent dealings with the tragic lovers, Woland seems to serve a purpose quite different to that of Mephisto: not only does he evidently wish the hero and heroine no harm, he even works positively to ensure their salvation (272); Woland does not even display the *desire* to thwart the Master and Margarita" (295). With such little resemblance between the characters in the two works, we can safely posit other theories for Bulgakov's choice of names, such as those I have given here. It should also be noted that Frieda (< Ger. *frei* 'free') can be derived from the Norse Goddess Freya, who herself had to be freed from an artisan who had tricked Odin and his retinue into promising him her hand in marriage.

[6] St. Augustine's theodicy explains that evil exists in the world as a result of free will and of free decision (*liberum voluntatis arbitrium*). No other explanation would be consistent with the Catholic theology of a good and benevolent God, for a good and benevolent God could not by definition allow evil into the world. However, by allowing humanity free will, then it is humanity that is responsible for bringing evil into the world and for allowing it to exist side-by-side with good. It is this same free will that Woland encourages both Margarita and the citizens of Moscow to exercise. While Margarita will use her free will for ultimate good, what Barratt terms "an act of the purest altruism" (245), in freeing Frieda, the citizens of Moscow will exercise their free will for petty evil.

Taoist duality is seen most clearly in the concept of the *yin* and the *yang*. The *yin* is a negative, passive, and weak force, while the *yang* is a positive, active and strong force. Rather than serving as polar opposites, however, they are an integral part of each other. In each living being, there are elements of both the dark (*yin*) and light (*yang*) sides. In Taoist philosophy, it should be the goal of every human being to sub-

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ordinate the *yin* to the *yang*, but the *yin* must remain with and as an integral part of the human being to provide a healthy and spiritual balance. A *yin*less human being would not be a healthy human being. Thus, Taoism sees all of humanity, indeed all of the cosmos, as a balance of light and dark forces in much the same way as Woland explains the coexistence of good and evil to Matthew the Levite.

[7] If Woland's domain is naturally understood as the fifth dimension, his powers seem far less mysterious. Following Kaku, Woland simply needs to enter into this dimension, reach back into three- or four-dimensional space—Einstein regarded time as the fourth dimension—fold it so that the point he needs to reach or in which he wishes to place someone is now touching his location, and then move himself or others to it by stepping back into three-dimensional space. This also explains how he can make matter appear from a void or back into a void. By reaching into the fifth dimension, he can enter into a new region of three dimensional space, take what he needs, and return. Likewise, he can reach back from the fifth dimension and take something away with him. Because an individual in the fifth dimension cannot be seen by someone in the third dimension, unless intentionally appearing as a third-dimensional being, these actions would appear to be magic. Arthur C. Clarke once noted that "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Woland is the master of this advanced technology and hence seems to be a magician.

[8] Other evidence that Woland is a master of time is seen in the effect he has on those who come into contact with him: Ruikin, Rimsky, Andrei Fokich, even Pilate and the Master—all age considerably after they come in contact with Woland. In addition to the evidence that Woland is a master of time and space, there is evidence that he is the "master" of the title. Campbell notes that "freedom to pass back and forth across the world dimension ... is the talent of the master" (229). Margarita's Master does not have this power outside of his ability to write the "Truth" about the past; Woland has full power over time and space.

[9] More properly, the troll's camp should be seen as a failed initiation because Gandalf must rescue Bilbo and his fellow adventurers; however, because Bilbo does learn from this trial, it is still a holy place.

[10] Although it is not indicated anywhere which scenes from *Henry IV* were to be included, Proffer indicates that it "was envisioned as a synthesis of the high points of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*, and the play was to have a juicy role in Falstaff" (410). This is likely true, as Falstaff is the only link between the plays; in fact, Shakespeare wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* solely because Elizabeth I, who loved the character, requested that an additional play starring him be penned.

[11] Only one Shakespeare comedy does not end with a marriage, completed or agreed to: *Measure for Measure*. The Duke offers marriage; Isabella remains silent. It is unthinkable, however, that there will be no marriage, for this is a comedy, and a comedy ends with such a sacred union that represents compromise and the planning of the next generation and, most importantly, that will restore societal order.

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